DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 828 EC 309 441

AUTHOR	Bateman, David; Bateman, C. Fred
TITLE	What Does a Principal Need To Know about Inclusion? ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Arlington, VA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-EC-02-13
PUB DATE	2002-11-00
NOTE	4p.; Digest number E635.
CONTRACT	ED-99-CO-0026
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Council for Exceptional Children, 1110 North Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22201. Tel: 800-328-0272 (Toll Free); Fax: 703-620-4334; e-mail: ericec@cec.sped.org. For full text: http://www.ericec.org.
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Role; *Change Strategies; Compliance (Legal); Decision Making; *Disabilities; Educational Change; Educational History; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inclusive Schools; Mainstreaming; Principals; *Student Placement
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

This brief paper on the inclusion of students with disabilities summarizes the history, terms, and legal requirements. The relevant section of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is cited followed by a brief review of the mainstreaming movement of the 1970s and the regular education initiative in the mid-1980s. Regulations governing inclusion are reviewed with emphasis on the following principles: (1) continuum of alternative placements; (2) determining the appropriate placement for a student; (3) considerations about inclusion; and (4) the Oberti test for placement decision making. Specific steps the principal can take to prepare staff for inclusion include ensuring staff awareness of legal requirements and terms and ensuring that large numbers of students with disabilities are not assigned to a single regular class teacher. Emphasized is the principal's role in fostering inclusion through careful use of time, staff development, and commitment. (DB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 473 828

What Does a Principal Need To Know About Inclusion?
ERIC Digest #E635

By
David Bateman
Fred C. Bateman

September 10, 2002/No. 1585

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

EC 309441

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
1110 North Glebe Road, Arlington, Virginia 22201-5704
1-800-328-0272 ericec@cec.sped.org http://ericec.org

Digest
E635

EDO-EC-02-13 November 2002

What Does A Principal Need to Know about Inclusion?

David Bateman and C. Fred Bateman

Inclusion is the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. To practice inclusion successfully the school principal and staff must understand the history, terms, and legal requirements involved as well as have the necessary levels of support and commitment.

History and Terms

The word inclusion is not a precise term, and it is often confused with similar concepts such as least restrictive environment (LRE) and mainstreaming. Educating children in the least restrictive environment has been mandated since the 1970s, when it was a major provision of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142). The law states that

> *To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities...are educated with children who are nondisabled; and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (34 C.F.R. §300.550)*

Mainstreaming. As practiced in the 1970s and early '80s, mainstreaming was an attempt to meet the LRE requirement by moving students from separate schools and classes to regular education classes for part or all of the school day. Often, students received their academic instruction in special classes and their time with nondisabled peers was spent in nonacademic activities such as lunch, recess, physical education, or perhaps art and music.

The Regular Education Initiative (REI). In the mid-80s, the Regular Education Initiative gave more responsibility to general education teachers and staff in the education of students with disabilities. The expectation was that the student would receive special education services, but would still participate in the general education classroom with the general education teacher assuming responsibility for at least part of the student's education.

Inclusion. Inclusion implies that students will be taught outside the regular education classroom only when all available methods have been tried and failed to meet their needs. If a student is pulled out of the general education classroom for instruction in another placement, the intent is for the pullout to be temporary and for the student to be reintegrated into the general education classroom as soon as possible.

Regulations Governing Inclusion

The laws and regulations governing the placement of students with disabilities do not imply that every student with a disability must be included in the regular classroom all of the time. Rather, the law requires that a continuum of services (of differing types and at different levels of inclusivity) will be available for every student, and emphasizes that the student's individualized educational program (IEP) is to be based on the student's specific needs. The law also describes how to determine the appropriate placement for a student. Information governing placement decisions can be found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34 C.F.R. §300.552.

Continuum of alternative placements. Federal regulations require that a continuum of placements be available and include instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. Supplementary services (e.g., resource rooms, itinerant instruction) must be provided in conjunction with regular class placement. In other words, students with disabilities must be included in general education settings to the maximum extent possible, but they do not have to be included when inclusion does not meet their particular needs.

Determining the appropriate placement for a student. The IEP Team determines the child's program and the aids and services the child is to receive. The IEP is the child's individualized program and includes a description of the steps taken to delineate the child's needs.

Considerations about inclusion. Inclusion is preferred because the general education classroom is where other students of the child's age are located, and students are usually in the same class as other children they know. Removing students from the general education classroom creates a stigma. When students leave the general education classroom to receive support, they are losing valuable instructional time. When inclusion is successful, all students—those with and without disabilities—benefit.

However, full inclusion is not the best placement for all students. The general education classroom is typically not individualized. Special education classrooms are often more structured than general education classrooms, thereby improving the chances of success for students who need more structure. General education teachers and staff often are not trained to work with students who have significant needs, and if appropriate supports are not provided, students may fall further behind their peers. Finally, not all services can be provided in general education classrooms.

The Oberti test. Court cases have produced guidelines that can be helpful in determining the best placement for a student. One of these is *Oberti v. Board of Education* (995 F.2d 1204 [3rd

Cir.1993] 19 IDELR 908), which specified three considerations for determining placement: (1) the steps taken by the school to try to include the child in the general education classroom; (2) the comparison between the educational benefit the child would receive in a general education classroom, including social and communication benefits, and the benefits the child would receive in a segregated classroom, and (3) possible negative effects inclusion would have on the other children in the general education class.

Preparing and Supporting Staff

It is up to the principal to prepare the school and the staff for inclusion and to provide the backing, in both resources and commitment, to make it succeed. There are specific steps a principal can take to prepare staff:

- Ensure that staff is aware of the legal requirements and terms. Explain supplementary aids and services.
- Make sure that staff and teachers know that most students with disabilities are already educated in general education classrooms most of the time and are included in almost all of the noncurricular activities. Point out that the majority of students with disabilities have mild disabilities.
- Reassure teachers that while they will need to make changes in their instructional methods and materials, support will be provided.
- Explain that while many students with disabilities have participated successfully in unstructured activities, they often do better in structured activities.
- Be sure staff understand that decisions made regarding children with disabilities are individualized decisions. Some students may have needs that must be addressed outside of the general classroom, but they will be placed in outside settings only after efforts to meet their needs in the general classroom with supplementary aids and services have failed.
- Explain that large numbers of students with disabilities will not be assigned to any teacher (e.g., only one or two per class).

Principals need to ensure that students with disabilities are assigned evenly among classrooms and to provide the time and staff development teachers will need.

Time. Ongoing time throughout the year is needed for planning, meetings, in-service training, and conferences. Regularly scheduled meeting times should be built into the schedule so that teachers can work, plan, and reflect on what has occurred. Reserved time each day is ideal, but reserved time each week may be more feasible. The time can be as little as 20 to 30 minutes.

When problems occur, special meetings may be necessary. Allow time and support for staff to attend those meetings. Do not overburden the same teacher with potential problems every semester. Plan with teachers who will work with specific students and discuss how teachers will work together to meet students' needs.

Staff Development. In-service sessions should be planned around what teachers say they need to learn about students with disabilities. It is best if in-service providers are able to come back and answer implementation questions within a month or two of their sessions. If the in-service providers cannot offer the information needed, bring together teachers and staff to help determine what additional information is necessary to solve problems. Provide opportunities for teachers and staff to attend conferences related to students with disabilities.

Commitment. How can a principal demonstrate commitment to all students in the school? There are a number of ways, including attending and participating in IEP meetings, asking how students are doing, providing positive reinforcement for good work, and providing positive reinforcement when teachers and other staff are working together to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Resources

Erickson, R. Ysseldyke, J., Thurlow, M. & Elliot, J. (1998). Inclusive assessments and accountability systems. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 31*(2), 24-29.

Kerns, J.F., Kleinert, H., Clayton, J. Burdge, M. & Williams, R. (1998). Principal supports for inclusive assessment. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 31*(2), 16-23.

Oberti v. Board of Education (995 F.2d 1204 [3rd Cir.1993] 19 IDELR 908).

Vaughn, S., Bos, C.S., & Schumm, J.S. (2000). *Teaching exceptional, diverse, and at-risk students in the general education classroom.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Walther-Thomas, C., Korinek, L., McLaughlin, V.L., & Williams, B.T. (2000). *Collaboration for inclusive education: Developing successful programs.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 34CFR §300.550 (1997).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 34CFR §300.552 (1975).

Excerpted from Bateman, D. & Bateman, C. F. (2001). *What does inclusion mean and what does a principal need to know about it?* In *A principal's guide to special education.* Available from the Council for Exceptional Children, Arlington, VA. Order Number P5356, 888.232.7733.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated, but please acknowledge your source. This digest was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, under Contract No. ED-99-C0-0026. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the positions of OERI or the Department of Education.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

☐ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket) form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☑ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").